

Arizona Audio Video Club

Newsletter for September, 2022

Steering Committee Members

Members-At-Large	Roy Cook , John Harvell , Dave Hjortland , Jeff Kalina , Paul Righello , Ben Taylor
Secretary	David Snyder
Treasurer	Deb Snyder
Newsletter Editor	David Snyder
Activity Groups Coordinator	Walter Nash

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Letter from the Secretary

by David Snyder

After many hours of work, I've finally managed to add everyone who registered for our August SpeakerFest event to our membership list. As a result, this issue of our newsletter will be received by an unprecedented number of new members. This is an exciting time for our club as we emerge from two years of the global pandemic and connect with those who share our passion and fascination with quality sound reproduction.

Since I have your attention, I'd like to invite you to consider becoming more involved with your Arizona Audio Video Club in 2023. You probably have ideas for fun audio events or skills to help our future events run smoothly. Perhaps there's a tool or technique related to the hobby that you could teach others about to enhance their enjoyment. Are there community outreach opportunities that you're aware of that could expose the next generation to the unique joy that comes from focused listening to great music?

The saying goes that *you only get out of something what you're willing to put into it*, and I've found that to be so true of our audio club. The friendships you will make with members of the steering committee and other active members will last a lifetime. This is what club membership is all about, and it's something that I want each of you to discover and experience for yourself in 2023.

In January, we will hold elections for Steering Committee members. Between now and then, we will finalize the preliminary events calendar and accept nominations. If you feel that 2023 is your year to get more involved, please let me or one of the other current SC members know. We'd love to have you onboard!

Even if you're not ready to step into an SC role, we need volunteers to help organize and sponsor events. Let me know if I can add you as a guest to our next SC meeting so that you can learn more about our plans for next year. I'm excited about the new friendships that will be formed because of the environments and opportunities that you helped to create. Let's make 2023 one of the best years for members of the AZAVClub. We can do it with your help.

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Digital Man Tries His Hand at Being An Analog Kid Again!

by Joe Goswami

In 2022 we are seeing an LP revival of sorts, primarily amongst the “Bearded Ones.” I’ve told the story several times before, but I sold my good vinyl to The In Groove’s Mike Esposito back in 2016 and used the money to build a music server. (All but the hard drive has survived – two ASUS Motherboards later.)

The drives that stored my PCM music library recently failed, including my only backup. Live and learn, I guess. Now streaming is the audiophile “word of the day.” My streaming system kicks butt! Amazon HD and Neil Young Archives played into a Bluesound Node 2i and then played through my recently repurchased PS Audio DirectStream DAC Sr.

So I asked my wife if I could buy a “Record Player.” She said “sure.” She didn't know how much I was gonna spend, but it also cost me a kitchen backsplash, with installation materials and labor. (I don't DIY tile or plumbing – just electrical, “click” flooring, & drywall).

The MoFi controversy? Malarky, as your President would say. I and a lot of other people knew that they were pressing off of digital masters as far back as the mid 1980's. They always sounded great to me. Be it GAIN I (CDs/200g LPs) or GAIN II (SACD/DSD/180g LPs). Music Direct had the turntable that fit my budget and tech specs. It was an open box that was marked down \$400 off of the list price, and they knocked another 10% off that. No dust cover, but no problem! I also bought an Ortofon Quintet moving coil cartridge and MoFi StudioPhono MM/MC preamp.

And Now for Something Completely Different... A Turntable/
Cartridge/Preamp/RCA to XLR Adapter (there's a reason why)

So my new “analog” rig consists of a Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs (MoFi or MFSL) StudioDeck Turntable fitted with an Ortofon Quintet Black moving coil cartridge fed into a Mofi StudioPhono MM/MC Preamp designed by Tim De Paravicini.

Going from an old Dual CS515 with a Grado Red cart to what I have now I can only describe as a Holy Schitt moment for me! There is NO NOISE heard even when the Quintet's Shibata stylus is dropped on one of dem der shiny black round thingies

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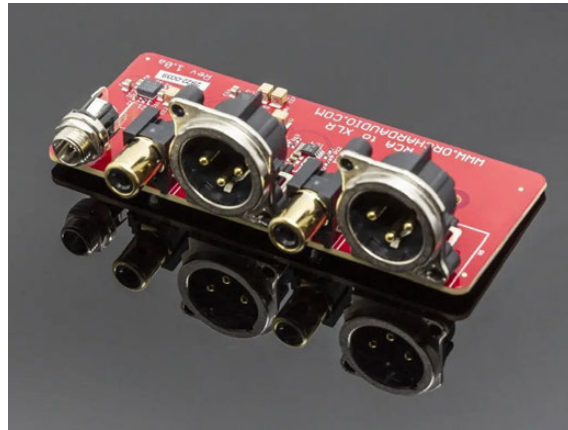
with a hole in the middle, with the sticker tellin' ya what songs are a playin' on that side of the shiny big disc.



MoFi StudioDeck turntable shown above with the Ortofon Quintet Black moving coil cartridge

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Left: MoFi StudioPhono designed by Tim De Paravicini.

Right: Orchard Audio RCA single ended to XLR true balanced/differential XLR Out

The Sound

Even though all my system's interconnects and speaker wiring are bought from Straight Wire Cable, I did have some AudioQuest Mackenzie RCA interconnects that were bought barely used from a gentleman on the PS Audio Forums. They were perfect for my new phono rig. Problem is, my BAT VK50-SE Preamp has only fully balanced inputs. Enter Leo Ayzenshtat & his Orchard Audio RCA to XLR adapter to the rescue (<https://orchardaudio.com/stereo-rca-xlr-module/>). Absolute quiet is all I can say.

Delrin platter material is all the rage nowadays, with no turntable mat needed. There's a reason why: The noise floor! The yellow button on both the turntable & phono preamp are a nod to the old Studer tape machines MFSL uses to this day to transfer from original master tapes and also to do DSD 256fs digital backups (thus MoFi-Gate).

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Having the PS Audio DirectStream DAC Sr. and now the matching PerfectWave Transport provides me a great reference to compare LPs to their CD and streaming equivalents. I'm trying not to duplicate SACD/DSD purchases and "acquisitions" on LP, just the PCM albums I lost recently. Digital IMHO will always outdo any vinyl equivalent remaster/reissue/original pressing. **BUT**.....this vinyl rig comes dangerously close to digital benefits.

My rig is 75% made in the U.S.A., which is very important to me. I wanted an LP12 table, but a seller said no to my offer. So I took matters into my own hands, and boy am I glad I did.

Joey G's LP Corner

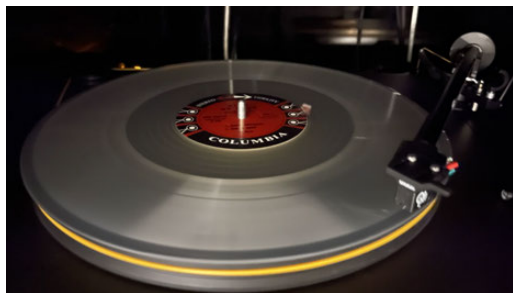
Miles Davis *Kind of Blue* – for the umpteenth time!!!! (Enough already!)

This was one of my first purchases from The In Groove. It's the mother of all *Kind of Blue* re-issues and there's lots of YouTube videos as well as online print reviews about this latest 45rpm Analog Productions (AP) Clarity 180 gram vinyl boxed set.



Compared to the 1992 super bit mapped & speed corrected version (as are all subsequent reissues after 1992) and the 2001 SACD 2.0 & 5.0, this LP is as good as what's on those digital formats. Better than the Sony SBM but equal to the SACD. This is a classic example of vinyl done good – but digital is best. Only by a hair!

Another not so fun fact: 2 minutes into Freddie Freeloader there's a triple "tick tick tick" noise. WTF! For a hundred and fifty big un's this is not cool, folks. Turns out, according to Mike @ In Groove, Chad Kassem (AP Owner) told him to be on the



lookout for these ticks. As with all LP pressings, the higher the serial number, the more worn the stamper will be and the less pronounced any plating defects will be heard. Lucky me got one of the lower end serial numbers! Mike ultrasonically cleaned it and all was well in the world again. Zapped it outta there!

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While I'm not into audiophile adjectives, what I can say is this box was worth every penny in packaging and sound quality. It's an all-star lineup that always had an all-star sound, but like a good single malt scotch it has aged very well and doesn't let technology get in the way of how the musicians come out of your left and right speakers (or center & surrounds for that matter).

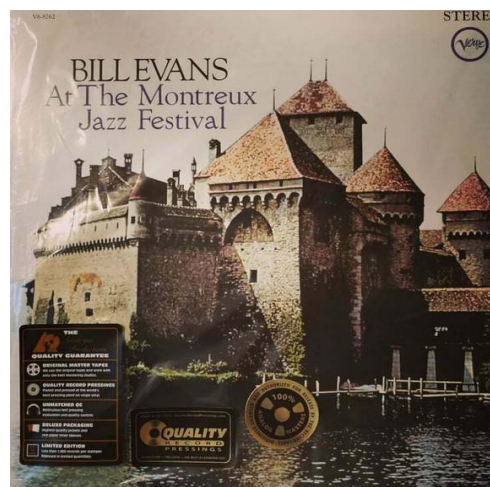
Bill Evans at the Montreux Jazz Festival

Warning: DO NOT BUY THE CHEAPER Verve reissue. Spend a few extra bucks and get the Analogue Productions version shown above and reviewed here.

I've been turned on to Bill Evans music for the last few years. His early sixties sidemen had one sound and his late sixties lineup had their own sound, anchored by the great playing of Mr. Evans whether or not he might have been under the influence of heroin. The sound quality of pretty much every Evans album that I've legally downloaded (DSD/SACD/CD/PCM), and now purchased on LP has been great. I bought LPs of *Trio 64*, *Trio '65*, *Portrait in Jazz* (DOL Europe pressing) as well recently, and was not disappointed until.....Verve pooped the bed on this pressing. It's full of noise, snaps, crackles, and pops. An ultrasonic cleaning made it WORSE!! I returned it to Zia and explained that several owners of this very recent pressing had the same problem as reported on Discogs.

Then I visited Record High on the way home from work and they had an Analogue Productions pressing that just sounds incredible. Gomez's bass playing, DeJohnette's drumming, and again with Evans anchoring the live performance is captured perfectly on this LP. A comparison against the high-res stream on Amazon HD again proved how good LPs are nowadays compared to yesteryear.

A great performance full of little sonic surprises.



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Emerson, Lake, & Palmer - Trilogy & Pictures at an Exhibition (MFSL Tarkus missed delivery 🙄)

I had the original MFSL pressing of this from 1994, and it was one of those I sold to The In Groove in 2016. Oops!!! Now I bought another from a seller in Europe somewhere and it arrived unscathed to my door the other day. The 96kHz/24 Bit WAV file I'd created had a bit too much computer denoising. I always liked it, but this TT/Cart/Pre combo just blows that WAV rip to smithereens! It's open, clear, and extremely detailed. I hear several nuances that were buried by the old Dual CS515/Grado Red/Denon AVR-1802 phono section.



I have the umpteenth remastered CD of ELP's Pictures at an Exhibition from the 50th Anniversary Boxed Set. Open, clear, and more detailed than ever, but it's still a CD and giving it some DSD off the "original master tapes" ain't gonna happen. This 42 year old LP bought at The In Groove for "just" \$50 was worth every penny! Everything I hear on the latest CD version with the added warmth or muscle of what I expect from a proper DSD transfer (remember, I support MoFi regarding MoFi-Gate). This is coming from a thin pressing 42-year-old LP transfer from what I'm assuming is a production copy from the master (been hanging around Ben Taylor too long – he he).

So am I now a Vinyl Convert? Aw, hell no!! But now that I have a decent vinyl rig I can pick and choose between the MFSL or Analog Productions or Craft Records, SACD Disc, or the 180 (and sometimes 200g) vinyl counterpart. Of course, this depends on whether the prices are the same or within \$5 of each other.

I missed the delivery of the 200g MFSL Tarkus (same 1994 Pressing) but I'll make the same assumption that I did comparing my LP to the WAV transfer of Trilogy.

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September Event Summary and Photos

by David Snyder, photos from Ben Taylor

Club member, Bill Warriner, and his wife, Nettie, opened their home and shared incredible hospitality with a couple of groups of eight club members. The subject of the event was vintage audio; something that Bill knows quite a bit about, as he ably demonstrated. Altec Model 19 loudspeakers, which he lovingly restored, were the centerpiece of the system we experienced. These have original woofers and GPA 802-8C reproduction tweeters. He recapped the crossovers and rewired them with more suitable wire. The 811B horn has been damped to minimize resonances, diffraction foam has been installed, and the cabinets have been refinished and internally braced. Cardas binding posts have been mounted to the back panel as opposed to the bottom panel to allow the use of modern speaker cables.



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In keeping with a vintage sound, the power amps in rotation included the MC-30's (modified to include a power supply choke) and the HK Citation II stereo amp which has the McShane power supply updates. Bill employed the subwoofer crossover that's integrated in the pre/pro with an 80Hz crossover point. Subwoofers are dual NHT 1259 drivers in each of 2 cabinets, powered by a Crown XLS1500 class D amp.



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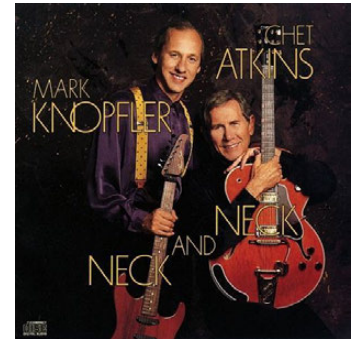
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Dave's Record Reviews

by Dave Hjortland

Chet Atkins & Mark Knopfler – [Neck & Neck](#)

(Columbia, LP & CD, 1990)



This is the work of two of the great guitar masters of our day, and is an achievement that just about anyone with any sense of musical appreciation will find it hard to dislike. The late Chet Atkins was of course a genius of the guitar, and Knopfler (of Dire Straits) became his near equal with his own talent and technique. This album was the result of the two of them getting together, jamming and having a good time. It was mostly recorded in Atkin's home studio, and though the relaxed, casual banter between the two might suggest that this was a mere throw-away type of thing, it was anything but. It was mastered by Doug Sax, a recording legend himself, and supporting musicians on some cuts include Mark O'Conner, Steve Wariner, and Vince Gill, among others.

The melodies are beautiful and the skill of the two players craft them into engrossing and at times amazing sounds. Personal favorites include the album's lead cut, "Poor Boy Blues," in which the pair seem to set the tone and show off their interplay. "There Will Be Some Changes Made" is a memorable highlight, with really humorous verbal jesting between the two. "The Next Time I'm In Town" is a great closer for the album, but there are other worthy cuts here as well.

All in all, this is an album that keeps on giving, keeps on impressing, one that you buy to give away to friends. The original CD version was released in 1990, and a good friend called it to my attention. I was also pleased to discover it as a 2012 Japanese Sony limited-release K2 HD+ CD, which raised the sonics into audiophile territory. In 2014 the specialty record label Music on Vinyl released a 180 g audiophile vinyl pressing that I could not resist, and... wow! It upped the audio quality further yet. It is currently available through Music on Vinyl in a blue vinyl, 2020 pressing. The LP delivers the audiophile goods – a deep, detailed, realistic sound with wonderful tone and soundstage. There are no stygian depths or soaring high frequencies here, so this is not a hi-fi, blow-you-away spectacular type of listen. Rather it is something you put on, sit back (preferably with an adult beverage of choice), be drawn into, and enjoy. Highly recommended!

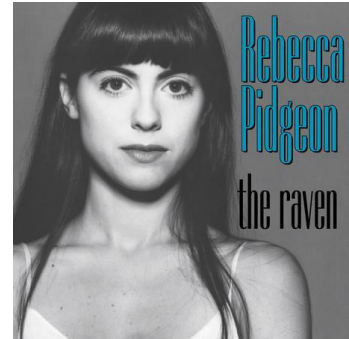
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Rebecca Pidgeon – [The Raven](#)

(Chesky 1994, Analogue Productions 2022)

You may well be familiar with this album, something of an audiophile favorite since its release by the audiophile label Chesky Records in 1994. It has been re-released in various CD, SACD, and vinyl versions since. Now Analogue Productions (aka Acoustic Sounds) has released it in a limited edition, 2-LP, 45 RPM format. When I stopped into my local hi fi store recently it was in a just-received shipment of records the owner was unpacking, and I was feeling impulsive...



This was Pidgeon's solo debut, after launching her singing career by way of a 4-year stint with a British folk/pop band. She has since gone on to release eight other albums and has also enjoyed a quite successful acting career. She has a strong, clear and beautiful voice, and her material has a vaguely Celtic air to it. Her accompaniment is fairly spare, and the overall impression here reminds me somewhat of Melody Gardot. Many of the songs are rather ballad-like, though a few have a bit more energy and passion to them. Her version of 'Spanish Harlem' is almost good enough to make you forget what an aging old chestnut this song is.

The original Chesky release was impressive for its fidelity, and even the CD – which I own – has really good sound. If you already own a previous version of it, I have to say that the \$60 cost of this new LP – excellent though it is! – is probably not going to be worth it for you. (I confess that I found myself regretting my aforementioned impulsiveness a bit...) If you do not have a previous version of this and are of the analog enlightened, you oughta consider it. Of course, if you are an audiophile blessed with deeper pockets than most of us, Analogue Productions also makes available a ¼", 15 IPS RtR tape for a mere \$450. That will probably be the 'definitive version' of this album. If you spring for it, please invite me over to hear it. Thank you.

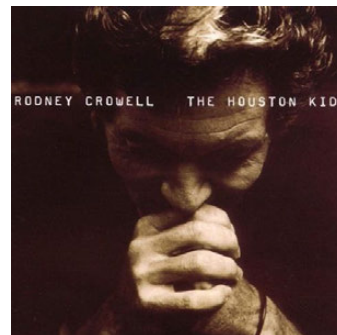
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Rodney Crowell – [The Houston Kid](#)

(Sugar Hill, CD only, 2001)

Yes, it's rare, but it happens. I occasionally feel compelled to review an album that for some reason has not been blessed to have been pressed on vinyl and is only available on CD. (Well, I expect it's probably available via streaming as well.)



Rodney Crowell has been an established figure in country and Americana music since the early 1970's when country artists started having hits with his songs. Emmylou Harris asked him to join her band in 1975, and he began releasing solo albums in 1978. He has continued to be successful as a songwriter while building his solo career, and has received many awards. His first four albums garnered favorable if not rave reviews and an enthusiastic following – but not huge sales. He finally attained major success with his fifth album, 1988's *Diamonds & Dirt*, which begat five #1 singles. At the time of this writing his solo catalog runs to some 17 studio albums plus assorted collections and work with other groups.

Crowell is an intelligent, reflective observer of the human condition, and writes songs that relate to real people as some – but all too few – popular songwriters can. Different songs of his reach people in different ways, but the depth and sensitivity of his songs is notable. Many critics suggest that a trio of albums he released in 2001, 2003, and 2005 represent his best work. I was tempted to review 2003's *Fate's Right Hand*, which is an excellent album, but in my humble (?) opinion, this 2001 release was his best of that trio and is my all-time favorite album of his.

There are a couple of turkeys on this album, but on the whole the material is very strong. I shouldn't and won't take the space to comment on all of the good songs here, but to mention just a few: The lead cut, "Telephone Road" is a rocker about Crowell's Houston childhood. "Why Don't We Talk About It" is a lament about broken relationships that is both musically crafted and emotionally affecting. "I Walk the Line (Revisited)" is a highlight, featuring a strong duet with his sometime father-in-law, Johnny Cash. "Topsy Turvy" is a rockin' observation of a dysfunctional family that becomes an earworm for me pretty much every time I hear it. And there are more.

I will confess that this CD may not be to everyone's taste. It requires something of a receptive mind to Americana and/or rock/pop types of music. For those of you not

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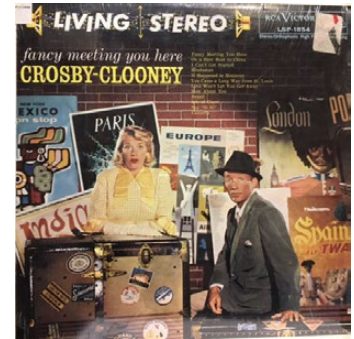
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hindered by preconceptions and a rigidly defined musical taste, well... this album is absolutely worthy of a try.

CLASSICS CORNER

Bing Crosby & Rosemary Clooney – [Fancy Meeting You Here](#)
(RCA, LP & CD, 1958)

With this edition of my column I continue my deep dive into 1950's popular music. Tongue-in-cheek I think of this as "old people's music," and confess that I even have that as a category label on a shelf of my LP collection. But that is not to imply that this is dusty, dated music of historical interest only – that would be a major mistake! This is good stuff. I can't say that it's the sort of thing to rank with some classic albums by, say, Sinatra, Julie London, or Nat King Cole. Oh, it's well-done enough and the talent is all here, but it's just too light-hearted and fun for that. Infectious is another good word.



Crosby was the biggest, most popular vocal entertainer of his day (at least pre-Sinatra) with good reason, and Clooney, while perhaps not quite the female equivalent, was also very popular and extremely talented. The ersatz theme of the record has the pair singing duets highlighting romance and travel about different locales around the world. Hey – there have been many worse themes albums have been built around! As well as the two stars, a number of other significant talents were involved in the making of this record. Tunesmiths Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen originated the concept, chose most of the material and wrote some of the songs for it. The lively music was arranged and conducted by Billy May, one of the best band leaders in the business. And the original LP was released under the RCA Living Stereo imprint – the sonics are excellent.

Yeah, the banter is scripted, but so what? The interaction between the two stars is relaxed and enjoyable – again, this is primarily and successfully a fun listen. Both singers are in excellent form, and their vocals complement each other's style so well you'd think they were singing together all their lives. The skillful contributions of the Billy May Orchestra weave in, around and through the tunes to form an integral part of the overall sound.

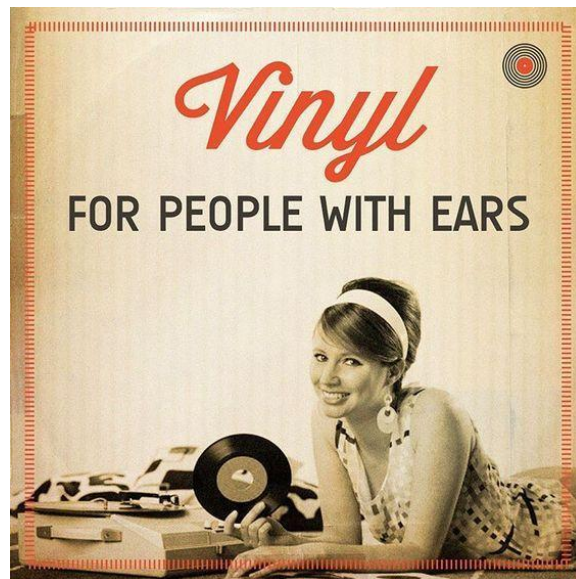
It was originally released in 1958 in both mono and stereo vinyl versions, and perhaps as a testament to its popularity it has seen a number of reissues since, including

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some international versions. I have a nm copy of the '58 mono release, and the sonics are... impressive. I have read some reviewers who like it more than the stereo version. Another version I have and can recommend is a 2001 remastered CD by Bluebird, an "audiophile division" of BMG Entertainment. As I compare the sonics of the two, the LP has a bit more body, though as a trade-off the CD presents a more appealing stereo mix.

As well as the original 13 album songs, the CD throws in six additional, um, rather... "different" cuts. Two of the six are duets of Clooney with Bob Hope instead of Crosby, in which Hope acquits himself rather well though he is no Crosby. Two additional cuts are duets of Crosby with singer Jo Stafford, who is a decent vocalist but is decidedly no Clooney. The final two additional cuts are Crosby solos, though for some reason the CD liner notes state that they are also Crosby-Stafford duets. Oh well.



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Tentative 2022 Event Calendar

October:	Analog Night
November:	Progressive Listening Night
December:	Swap Meet

This calendar is subject to change as we have many more great ideas coming in from members, so please stay tuned. I hope we can count on you to participate in 2022!

2023 Event Ideas

1. DAC Shoutout. Easy to get vendor support. Choose top ten to \$15K?
2. SpeakerFest 2023 Different parameters. Raise price to \$15k?
3. Three well-known speaker designers on a panel to discuss design priorities
4. Vinyl vs Streaming - A/B demo. Blind?
5. DIY something. Ed Goff home Visit?
6. How to best build a great music collection. Files, CDs, LPs, Streaming
7. Danish Night. Gear by Danes. It's all pretty dang good
8. Home Hoppin. Start at 6pm. Pick 3 homes within 15 minutes of each other
9. In Home Demo of Before and After Room Correction- One day event.
10. WC Audio manufacturers exhibition. CA, AZ, WA, UT, OR.
11. Outdoor nighttime Musician, vocalist. Who/where?
12. 7 Secrets to Audio Nirvana. Put those thinking caps on

October Event Announcement

Analog music night! That's right. Bring a few of your favorite vinyl records to Faith Lutheran Church on **Wednesday, October 26 at 7:00 pm** to share with club members. Please be prepared to share a few words about why these recordings are meaningful to you and what we should listen for to get the most out of the experience.

>>> [Click Here](#) to join or renew your AZAVClub Membership <<<

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Dealer Area

As always we want to recognize and thank all the local retailers who support our club so graciously

Equipment Dealers:

[Acoustic Designs Group](#)

[Dedicated Audio](#)

[LMC Entertainment](#)

[Woolson Audio](#)

[Arizona HiFi](#)

[USA Tube Audio](#)

[Audio Video Excellence](#)

[Big Ear Stereo](#)

Vinyl:

[Record High in Phoenix](#)

[In-Groove Records](#)

Repairs:

James Koch

james@highendrepair.com

Audio Doctor

<http://www.audiodoctor.biz/>

Jeff's Professional Audio Repair - also car stereo work

4221 North 19th Ave

Phoenix, AZ 85015

602-274-0794 | jparepair@yahoo.com

M-F 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Michael Mitchell - Refoaming Speaker Surround Service

480-749-7003 | mmiller43228@yahoo.com

Richard Jensen - Turntable Set-up and record cleaning

ANALOG resource

602 717 2399 | worksbau@gmail.com

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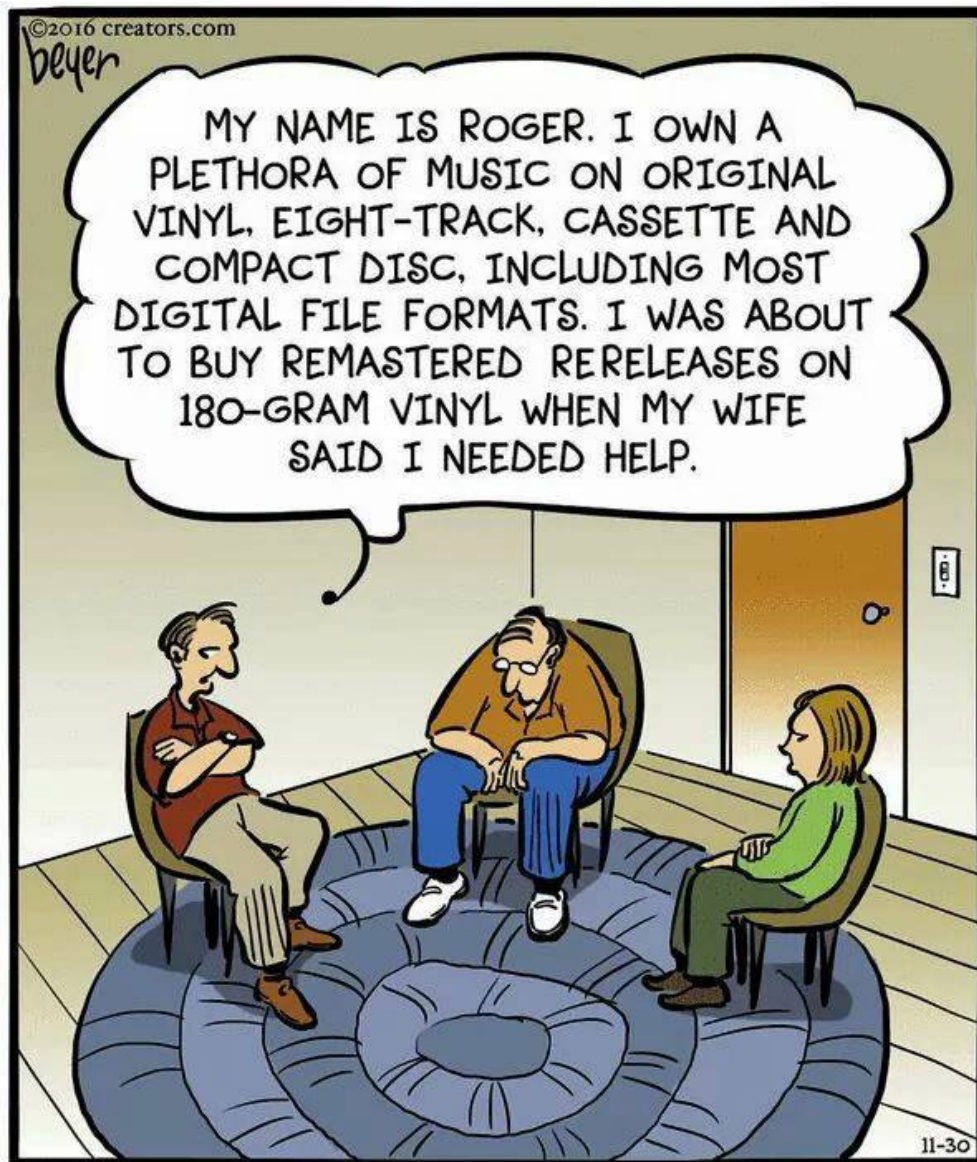
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Humor



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Audiophiles Anonymous